

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on September 22, 2008 has been reviewed carefully and the Applicants provide the arguments set forth herein in a sincere effort to place the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejection of the claims, and allowance of the same, are respectfully requested on the basis of the following remarks.

Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 1-12, 14, 16-17, and 19-20 will be pending in the application. Claims 13, 15 and 18 have been canceled.

Rejection of claims 1-12, 14, 16-17, and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-12, 14, 16-17, and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) for allegedly being unpatentable over by U.S. Pat. Appl. Pub. No. 2002/0114955 (hereinafter, "Lamers") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,429,256 (hereinafter, "Vandervoorde").

The present application, however, is a National stage application of a PCT application that was filed on March 25, 2003. The PCT application claimed priority to a German application that was filed on March 27, 2002, which is before the July 4, 2002 publication date of Lamers. In order to perfect the foreign priority, the Examiner has indicated that a translation of the foreign priority document is required. Accordingly, the Applicants submit herewith an English translation of the German patent application from which the present application claims priority. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that Lamers can no longer be used as a reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(a).

Because Vandervoorde alone does not disclose and/or suggest every feature that is recited in the Applicants' claim 1, the Applicants submit that claim 1, and claims that depend directly or indirectly therefrom, are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing arguments, it is submitted that claims 1-12, 14, 16-17, and 19-20 are in proper form for issuance of a Notice of Allowance and such action is respectfully requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Diaz', is written over a horizontal line.

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